

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

November 30, 1976

Bush Denies CIA Edited Record Of Oswald Call

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CIA Chief George Bush yesterday denied reports that his agency withheld information from the Warren Commission, saying the Central Intelligence Agency has done "everything it could to cooperate."

Responding to reporters' questions before his address to the Comstock Club at the Sacramento Inn, Bush said the CIA has cooperated "fully" with Congress' investigation of the Kennedy assassination.

"I've talked to Sen. Schweiker and others on the Senate Select Committee investigating the matter and they feel they've received full cooperation from us," he said.

The Washington Post reported Friday that the CIA intercepted and recorded a phone call that Lee Harvey Oswald made from the Cuban Embassy to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City eight weeks before John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. But, the Post said, the intelligence agency furnished only part of the transcript to the FBI and later to the Warren Commission, which investigated the Kennedy murder.

The Post claims that the CIA deleted that portion of the conversation in which Oswald offered "information" of an unspecified nature to the Soviets in return for paid passage to the Soviet Union.

Bush also was questioned about reports that the Glomar Explorer, a ship built by the late Howard Hughes and used by the CIA, successfully salvaged a Soviet submarine with hydrogen missiles from the Pacific Ocean.

"I have absolutely no comment whatsoever," he said. "And to continue discussing it would be wasting your time and wasting mine."

Time magazine this week quotes an unidentified senior U.S. Navy officer as saying "It was all one hell of a success," despite the story floated by the CIA in March 1975 that the recovery had only partially succeeded.

The 1974 salvage operation, dubbed "Project Jennifer," recovered virtually intact a 320-foot-long Golf-class II diesel-powered Soviet submarine built in 1961 which sank after an ex-

plosion in 1963, according to Time.

The CIA has denied comment.

In his speech to the Comstock Club, Bush called for legislation designed to protect CIA agents from the disclosure of their names or sensitive secrets.

He also defended the agency's lack of access to the public, saying the CIA has cooperated fully with Congress, which has a right to know what is in the CIA budget, but the public doesn't.

"Every single penny of the CIA budget is reported to the proper committees of Congress," Bush said.

He added that seven congressional committees review either spending or program proposals of the CIA.

Bush said less than two per cent of the CIA budget is spent on covert activities and that those activities are now approved in advance by both congressional and administration oversight agencies.

While welcoming establishment of executive branch and congressional oversight bodies, Bush said, "Secrecy is required to protect our methods."

"When I see a book or article that deliberately exposes our operations and relations with other governments, that deliberately names our people and their contacts, I have nothing but contempt for those authors.

"Nothing could be more damaging to the interests of our nation and our national security."

Just last week, Bush squelched rumors that he would continue as head of the embattled agency under the Carter Administration by announcing plans to quit his post on inauguration day.

The one-time congressman, top-level diplomat and head of the Republican Party took charge of the CIA less than a year ago.

The lanky Texan also fended off reports that the Soviet Union blinded U.S. reconnaissance satellites orbiting high over the Indian Ocean last year. Newsweek has reported that the U.S. satellites were victims of a Soviet laser — a charge the Defense Department officially denies.

"Don't believe everything you read," Bush snapped. "Parts of the Newsweek story are correct, but not all of it."